**Aubade With Collard Greens**

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# Aubade With Collard Greens

by damnslippyplanet

Summary

Will manages not to choke on his coffee, Hannibal pretends he wasn't listening in from the hallway even though he's glowing with delight when he brings in Will's next refill, and Abigail stops live-tweeting the conversation to her Tattle Crime followers to reach for her own newly-topped-off mug of blood substitute. Of such niceties, a remarkably pleasant New Year's Eve is made.

Or: A shameless dollop of New Year's Eve fluff in the vampire-'verse.

Notes

It's not necessary to have read the other bits of this 'verse. What you need to know is:

A) In my head, the name for this 'verse is "Vampire Hannibae And His Cheerful Human Dinner, Will Graham", which tells you all you need to know about that dynamic.

B) Abigail was vamped to save her life after her dad tried to kill her, and now occupies herself writing a column about being a newbie vampire for Tattle Crime, and following Hannibal around trying to pick up vampire history and lifehacks. She is quite popular and is at any given point in time probably live-tweeting the antics of her sire and his shaggy boyfriend to her rapidly swelling online following. There's probably a hashtag. This will probably get its own fic someday because Baby Vampire Journalist Abigail cracks me up deeply.

Will can't remember the last time he bothered to stay up until midnight for the new year, but he manages it this year. Months of a strange hybrid schedule, an imperfect and impermanent solution to keep one foot in each of the vampire and human worlds, have accustomed him to late nights.

Even so, he appreciates the cups of coffee Hannibal plies him with to help him stay awake: thick and dark, sweeter than he normally takes. His hands feel large and clumsy on the small bone china cups, but Hannibal refuses to provide an actual mug. Something about Turkish coffee requiring a special vessel for optimum heat retention.

Sometimes, Will thinks the miracle isn't so much the way the two of them have fallen into their current life. That makes sense in its own fractured way - it *would* take someone this far out of the ordinary to put up with Will's bullshit. The miracle is probably that Will puts up with Hannibal's; a man with a less-developed sense of morality would have staked Hannibal for his sheer bloody-minded stubbornness ages ago.

He settles for grumbling, "Next year, I'm bringing a thermos."

Abigail looks up from her cell phone long enough to arch an elegant eyebrow at him and say, "Please. You'll be living here by next year. Unless you're planning to drag him out to Wolf Trap."

Will manages not to choke on his coffee, Hannibal pretends he wasn't listening in from the hallway even though he's glowing with delight when he brings in Will's next refill, and Abigail stops live-tweeting the conversation to her Tattle Crime followers to reach for her own newly-topped-off mug of blood substitute. (Full-sized. Mugs, apparently, are fine for blood.)

Of such niceties, a remarkably pleasant New Year's Eve is made. They clink mugs-and-stupidly-tiny-china-cups at midnight and then Will wanders off to bed around one, leaving Hannibal and Abigail to whatever it is vampires talk about when their humans are gone. He checks the curtains are shut tight and then climbs into bed.

Just before drifting off he lets himself consider, very briefly, that if they *did* live together he'd probably have to ban the dogs from the bedroom. Too much chance of them bumping up against the curtains and creating disastrous slivers of light during the night.

Maybe it would work with a different bedroom, though. One with deep shade in the morning, or shutters. Then he could have the dogs and Hannibal both.

It's a pleasant thought to drift off to, even if it probably won't ever happen.

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The mattress dips under Hannibal's weight, enough to stir Will from his sleep. He slides under the blanket, plasters himself up against Will's side, and Will groans theatrically.

“If I were designing a monster,” he gripes, “I’d make it a warm one. None of this my-feet-are-always-cold bullshit.”

“No one designed us,” Hannibal murmurs into his chest, pressing close against his skin, warming to Will’s body temperature. “We just happened.”

“Ugh.” Will finally cracks his eyelids open. “What time is it?”

"Around five. There’s a little while yet until sunrise. Not long, though.”

“Did Abigail take off?”

“Hours ago. She had more exciting things to do than spend the rest of her New Year’s Eve with an old man. I believe she and some friends are playing chicken with the sunrise. For her blog.”

Will tries not to snicker, but he really thinks he might never get tired of hearing Hannibal pronounce the word “blog.” It’s a combination of the accent and how incongruous it sounds coming out of his mouth.

“Were you that dumb when you were new?”

“No doubt. Immortality goes to one’s head. I wasn’t entirely immune to the effect. I may have done a foolish thing or two.”

He’s tried, but still can’t quite picture a younger Hannibal, newly vamped, as headstrong and foolhardy about his new powers as Abigail’s inclined to be. He’d like to hear about it someday, but Hannibal’s going to be asleep long before he can tell a good story.

After a few moments of quiet, Hannibal shifts up onto the pillow next to Will’s head. He stares at Will, all soulful vampire eyes full of terrible ideas, before asking, “Are you staying today?”

“Can’t. Beverly’s coming over to run around with the dogs and get away from her family for a while. The great cultural exchange continues.”

“More kimchi?”

“No, thank god. Grandma Katz apparently made a million latkes. Bev’s bringing the extras. I’m on the hook for black-eyed peas and greens.”

Food discussion animates Hannibal even when he’s halfway to sunrise sleep, of course. His expression brightens as he asks, “New Year’s food?”

“We didn’t do it every year when I was a kid, but…” Will shrugs, skimming lightly over the surface of the memories as he usually does with his childhood. “You don’t have to be superstitious to enjoy a good plate of collards.”

“And the peas for luck?”

“Or because they’re delicious.  Take your pick.”

“Mm.  Bring me some of both.”

“Demanding for a guy who doesn’t actually eat food.”

(He will bring the leftovers, of course. He’ll even use the good Tupperware Hannibal left at his house, and not his own plastic junk.  But that doesn’t mean he doesn’t get to give Hannibal crap about it.)

Hannibal nudges up against his shoulder, every bit the same way Winston would, before he adds, “I’d like to have a few bites, since you made it.  Vampires need luck, too.”

Will refrains from pointing out that Hannibal’s been getting plenty lucky in recent months; no point starting something they can’t finish, this close to sunrise.  He just pets at Hannibal’s hair gently and says, “Sure. I’ll even bring you some latkes.”

They drift together for a few minutes, until Hannibal’s nearly gone under.  Before he goes, Will does tip Hannibal’s face up toward him before asking, “Collards are good for iron, right?  Am I supposed to be dessert?”

Hannibal smiles, sharp and sleepy and hungry, and doesn’t answer.  Doesn’t particularly have to.  He nips at Will’s lower lip in a goodnight kiss, and then he’s gone.

Will stays close a little longer before he gets up, keeping Hannibal warm as long as he can.  He checks the curtains one more time before he leaves, just in case.

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He locks the door on his way out and watches his breath puff and curl in the cold air on the way to the car.  It always makes him think of dragons.  He wonders if Hannibal ever thought of dragons, back when he had breath.

After he scrapes snow off the car, he sits inside while it defrosts, blowing on his hands until they warm up.  Once he can feel his fingers again, he pulls out his phone to shoot Bev an email rescheduling their lunch for half an hour later than originally planned.  He’ll pick up some cornbread fixings along the way; might as well go all out, if he’s going to do the New Year’s day food-for-good-luck thing.

A second text goes to Abigail: *Please confirm you got back inside and are not currently a pile of ashes in your backyard. If you’re a pile of ashes, please send me the hashtag for your virtual wake* .

The sun’s well up above the horizon now, painting the sky pink and gold.  He sits and watches it spread for a few more minutes, thinking about what it would be like not to see it ever again.  To sleep away all his mornings with Hannibal, somewhere in a shady bedroom with heavy drapes, warmed by dogs but never sunlight.  Hundreds of mornings.  Thousands.  Hundreds of thousands, maybe, if they were careful, and safe.

*You’re getting ahead of yourself, Graham* .

He schools the smile off his face and sends one final text, this one to Hannibal.  Then he'll get on the road, back to cornbread and Wolf Trap and the daylight world.

*Happy New Year.  I'll be over by eight.  Make me some real damn coffee tonight and we'll stay up until dawn.*

He'll probably be regretting that promise around 3 a.m., but what the hell.  It'll make Hannibal happy, and Will can take a nap after lunch to make sure he can stay awake all night.

After all, you only live once. Unless you're particularly lucky.

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